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Message Text

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PAGE 01 GUATEM 01908 061932Z

43
ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 CU-02 INR-05 EA-06 AF-04 ISO-00 /038 W
---------- 032402
P 061625Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 695

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STADIS//

LIMDIS

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: SWEL SCUL PINT GT
SUBJECT: POSSIBILITY OF HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING MATCH

1. AMBASSADOR CALLED ON MINISTER OF FINANCE LAMPORT MARCH 5. LAMPORT SAID HE HAD REQUESTED THE CALL ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM PRESIDENT LAUGERUD.

2. LAMPORT SAID THAT TWO AMERICANS ARE IN GUATEMALA TRYING TO PERSUADE THE GOG PROVIDE BACKING FOR A HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING MATCH FEATURING MUHAMMAD ALI SOME TIME LATER THIS YEAR, PROCEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO GUATEMALAN RELIEF. THEIR NAMES ARE LEROY JACKSON AND ROBERT M. BURKE, III.

3. PRESIDENT LAUGERUD, SAID LAMPORT, HAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE WISDOM OR DESIRABILITY OF GOG BACKING FOR SUCH A VENTURE, BUT HE IS UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE FROM THE NATIONAL TOURISM INSTITUTE (INGUATE) AND LOCAL HOTEL OWNERS WHO ARGUE THAT SUCH A MATCH IS JUST WHAT IS NEEDED TO GET THE TOURISM INDUSTRY ON ITS FEET AGAIN.

4. LAMPORT SAID GUATEMALA HAS ABOLUTELY NO EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SORT OF THING AND REQUESTED THE AMBASSADOR'S ASSISTANCE IN DISCREETLY FINDING OUT WHAT KIND OF REPUTATION THE TWO "PROMOTOR" HAD, WHETHER THEY ARE AUTHORIZED TO SPEAK FOR ALI, AND WHETHER A CONTRACT WITH THEM WOULD IN FACT COMMIT ALI TO AFIGHT IN GUATEMAL.
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PAGE 02 GUATEM 01908 061932Z

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5. AMBASSADOR SAID HE WOULD SEE WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE WITH REGARD TO THE TYPE OF VENTURE PROPOSED TO GUATEMALA, AND RELAY THE RESULTS OF HIS INQUIRIES TO LAMPORT.

6. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF FACT THAT THIS REQUEST ORIGINATED FROM PRESIDENT LAUGERUD, AND THAT HE IS UNDER GREAT PRESSURES IN THIS POST-QUAKE PERIOD, INFORMATION WHICH WOULD ENABLE HIM TO DECIDE WHETHER SUCH A FIGHT WOULD BE OF BENEFIT TO GUATEMALA WOULD BE VERY USEFUL. ANY INFORMATION WHICH DEPARTMENT CAN PROVIDE WOULD BE APPRECIATE, INCLUDING SUCH FACTORS AS WHETHER SUCH A FIGHT RESULTS IN A NET FINACIAL GAIN OR LOSS TO THE HOST COUNTRY, AND WHETHER CROWDS AND VISITORS IT GENERATES CAN EASILY BE HANDLED BY A PARTIALLY DESTROYED CITY. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY EVALUATION OF REACTION DEPARTMENT MIGHT SEE FIT TO ELICIT FROM EMBASSIES MANILA, KUALA LUMPUR AND KINSHASA WHERE ALI HAS PREVIOUSLY HAD SUCH FIGHTS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISASTER RELIEF, ATHLETIC PRESENTATIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976GUATEM01908
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760086-0844
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760387/aaaaczec.tel
Line Count: 78
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS; LIMDIS, STADIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUN 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <13 JUL 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBILITY OF HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING MATCH
TAGS: SWEL, SCUL, PINT, OTRA, GT, RP, MY, CG, US, (MUHAMMAD ALI), (JACKSON, LEROY), (BURKE, ROBERT M III)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006